

NOTES ON LUKE

VOLUME 1

CHAPTERS 1-3

LUKE 1-3

I. Introduction. V. 1:1-4

A. The author.

1. Note the title of this book in your Bible: "The gospel according to St. Luke"

A. This title is in the Greek text with two exceptions:

1) The word for gospel has an adjective "holy" identifying what kind of gospel = a holy gospel; a set apart gospel.

2) There is no word in the Greek for "Saint." Luke was a saint just as you and I who are born again. The placing of "Saint" was a Roman Catholic practice observed by some Protestants. Therefore, it was placed there by the translators.

B. "Gospel" = glad tidings; good news.

C. The gospel is not the gospel of Luke, but "according to" Luke. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. This gospel bears the name of the author as being Luke.

3. Luke is the human instrument who penned down what the Holy Ghost revealed to him. (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16) He also penned down the book of Acts in which he referred to this gospel as being "the former treatise have I made." (Acts. 1:1) "Treatise" is a word meaning anything reported in speech, or a continuous account of things done.

4. Luke is referred to by Paul in Col. 4:14 as "the beloved physician." "Beloved" means esteemed, dear, worthy of love; thus, this reveals the love in Paul's heart for Luke. He was Paul's personal physician and accompanied Paul on parts of his second and third missionary journeys, as well as on his voyage to Rome. No doubt Luke, as a physician, rendered help to Paul's health which enabled him to have a more effective ministry with days possibly being added to his life.

5. It seems that Luke joined Paul at the time of the Macedonian vision because after that the penman of Acts, who was Luke, referred to the group with Paul as "we" which included himself. Before that time he referred to the group as they. (Acts 16:10-12, 8)

6. This gospel seems to have been written about AD 60 during the time Paul was a prisoner for two years at Caesarea near the Mediterranean Sea.

7. Some say Luke was a Jew. He is considered by the majority to be a Gentile Christian. We do not think he was a convert of Paul because the apostle never calls him "son" as he does Timothy and Titus. But there is no doubt that he was greatly influenced by Paul of which there are clear traces in his writings.

8. Luke is one of four gospels with each presenting a different aspect of our Lord, yet all four aspects are needed to give the full truth.

A. In Matthew, we see Jesus as the "Messiah-King." As Sovereign He comes to rule and reign; therefore, his genealogy is traced through Joseph, back to Abraham showing His kingly relationship.

B. In Mark, we see Jesus as "Jehovah's Servant." As a Servant, He came to serve and suffer, revealing His humility. Therefore, there are no genealogies recorded in Mark, for who is concerned with the genealogy of a servant.

C. In John, we see Jesus as the "Son of God." As the Son of God, He came to reveal and redeem; therefore, He is declared to be God (John 1:1,14), revealing His ability to redeem which is the reason the book of John was written. (John 20:31)

D. In Luke, we see Jesus as the "Son of Man." As Son of Man He came to share and sympathize; therefore, His genealogy is traced through Mary back to God, showing His humanity.

E. Wonderful fourfold blending = sovereignty and humility; humanity and deity!

9. The first three gospels are called "synoptic" = giving account from same point of view--similar; therefore, one has to read all three to get the complete story and then there are many things that are not recorded. (John 21:25)

B. The review. V. 1-2

V. 1

1. "Taken in hand" = means to attempt or undertake.
2. "To set forth in order" = simply means to give a narrative; refers to a full and fair arrangement of the principle facts in the history of our Lord.
3. "A declaration" = a narrative - an account of.
4. "Those things which are most surely believed among us" = "us" could refer to all the Christians then living - may apply to Luke, Paul, and those present with them when this was penned down; this phrase means things fulfilled and has the sense of things that are taken for granted as true or the acknowledged facts of the case.

V. 2. "They" = "eyewitnesses" = those who had seen those things themselves and who were therefore proper witnesses; refers to the informants of Luke who had seen Jesus in person - Luke had not.

3. "Delivered" = they narrated them; they gave an account of them.
4. "Them" = things most surely believed. (verse 1)
5. "From the beginning" = from the commencement of these things - from the birth of John and Jesus - that Luke penned down.
6. "Ministers of the word" = refers to the apostles, the seventy disciples, and perhaps to other preachers who had gone forth to proclaim these truths.

V. 3

1. "It seemed good to me also" = I (Luke) thought it best; I have also determined; it seemed to be good for that there should be a full, authentic, and accurate account of these matters.
2. "Having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" = having exactly with diligence followed up everything to the source to obtain an accurate account of the matter; it seems many people had tried their hand at sorting things out and setting them down, but the Spirit of God passed over them all and settled on Luke and gave him spiritual discernment to sort out the facts from the fables and the falsehoods.
3. "From the very first" = translated from a Greek word which means from above, from a higher place; refers to things which came from heaven or God - refers to the fact he received firsthand direct divine revelation from the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16)
4. "To write" = to express in written character.
5. "In order" = suggest chronological sequence - nothing about this great enterprise was going to be haphazard; this word does not indicate that the exact order of time would be observed, for that is not the way in which he writes; but it means distinctly, particularly, in opposition to the confused and broken opposition to which he had referred before.
6. "Unto thee" = "Theophilus" = we do not know exactly who this is; Luke also addressed the book of Acts to this same person (Acts 1:1); he may have been one of Luke's converts, in Philippi or Antioch who bore the expense of copying Luke's two books for many churches - total speculation; this word is made up of two Greek words which mean "friend" and "God" = therefore, the name means friend of God; therefore, this book is written to those who are friends of God; described as "most

excellent" = used in addressing men of prominent rank or office as Luke recorded in Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25, thus this man could have been a Roman official of high rank, but he was saved.

D. The reason. V. 4

V. 4

1. "That" = introduces the reason for this writing.
2. "Thou" = refers to Theophilus; applies to all saints who are friends of God.
3. "Mightest know" = to become thoroughly acquainted with; means to have full knowledge.
4. "The certainty" = have full evidence or proof of.
5. "Those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" = refers to things that Theophilus had been informed by word of mouth; thus, Luke writes to confirm what Theophilus has learned by word of mouth.

II. Two proclamations. V. 1:5-38

A. To Zacharias, concerning the birth of John. V. 1:5-25

1. Zacharias' spouse. V. 5-7

V. 5

1. "There was in the days of Herod the king of Judaea" = Judea was a province of the Roman Empire; it was taken about 63 years before Jesus' birth by Pompey, and placed under tribute; Herod received his appointment from the Romans and had reigned at the time of the birth of Jesus 34 years; though he was permitted to be called king, yet in all respects he was dependent on the Roman emperor; he was commonly called Herod the Great because he had distinguished himself in wars, he showed great talents in governing and defending his country, in repairing the temple and in building cities of his kingdom; he also was much distinguished for his cruelty and his crimes as he was for his greatness; during his reign John the Baptist and Jesus were born; he was an Edomite by blood and Jewish by religion.
2. "A certain priest named Zacharias" = his name means "remembered of Jehovah;" he was a descendant of Levi and also Aaron through whom the priesthood came; a true priest was one who offered sacrifices and was busied with sacred rites.
3. "Of the course of Abia" = when the priest became so numerous that they all could not minister at the altar, David divided them into 24 lots or courses, each one of which officiated for a week (I Chron. 24:1-19); the course of Abia was the eighth course (I Chron. 24:10); Abia in NT is Abijah in OT.
4. "His wife was of the daughters of Aaron" = she was the daughter of a priest, a descendant of Aaron; to be a priest was an honor but to also be married to the daughter of a priest was considered a great honor.
5. "Her name was Elisabeth" = name means "oath of God."

V. 6

1. "They" = "both" = Zacharias and Elisabeth.
2. "Righteous before God" = just in God's sight- so translated in Mat. 1:19; implies strict legal observance of God's law; it means more than external conformity to the law- it is an honorable testimony of their piety (reverence of the Supreme Being) toward God.
3. "Walking in all the commandments" = means obeying the commandments of God.
4. "Ordinances" = refers to the rites and customs which God had ordained or appointed.
5. "Blameless" = implies no fault or deficiency could be found in them, not just externally as Paul was in Phil. 3:6 but internally as well; they both had a real love of God and sincere regard for His law.

6. They were part of the remnant that stayed true to God during this 400 year period of time from Malachi to Matthew when there was no open revelation of God.

V. 7

1. "They" = "both" = Zacharias and Elisabeth.
2. "They had no child" = this was a heavy calamity in a Hebrew home; possibly looked on by others as a mark of Divine displeasure or as the punishment of some grave sin.
4. "Barren" = unable to conceive – the reason they were childless; there was no hope of the long looked for Messiah being born in their home.
5. "They both were now well stricken in years" = old or advanced in life, so as to render the aspect of having children hopeless; one commentary stated that among the Jews the commencement of old age occurred when a person became 65; at 70, he was said to have reached "hoary – headed age;" and at 80, he was said to be "well stricken in years."

2. Zacharias' service. V. 8 – 10

V. 8

1. "It came to pass" = the month of the year arrived when the course of Abia had the service of the sanctuary and the lot fell on Zacharias to go into the holy place of the temple and to burn incense on the golden altar = what it meant was that "he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course."
2. "Before God" = the golden altar was before the veil that separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies which housed the ark where God's Shechinah glory appeared representing the presence of God; thus it was "before God" that Zacharias offered incense.

V. 9

1. "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was" = it was customary for the priest to divide their daily task by lot.
2. "His lot" = the use of objects in making a determination or choice at random; when used in the Bible it was considered that God had His hand in the selection; this gave the priest chosen the right to enter the Holy place.
3. "To burn incense" = incense refers to the odors of spices and gums, burnt in religious rites, or as an offering to deity – God; Exo. 30:34 gives the ingredients.
4. "The temple of the Lord" = refers to the temple Zerubbabel built on Mount Moriah which King Herod was in the process of restoring; Zacharias went into the Holy place where incense was burned.

V. 10

1. "The whole multitude of the people" = these are the believing remnant of Israel – religious people, zealous for the law and attentive to the rites and rituals that Moses had commanded.
2. "Were praying" = this was the regular time of evening prayer "at the time of incense."
3. "Without" = refers to the courts around the temple where they gathered to worship and pray.

3. Zacharias' shock. V. 11 – 25

a. The reason. V. 11 – 12

V. 11

1. "Him" = Zacharias.

2. "Appeared" = to become visible to the eye.

3. "An angel of the Lord" = a messenger sent from God; Gabriel by name—the announcing archangel. (verse 19)

4. "Standing on the right side of the altar of incense" = between the golden altar and the table of shewbread.

V. 12

1. "Zacharias" = "he" = second "him" = the priest officiating at this time.

2. First "*him*" = the angel.

3. "He was troubled" = to strike one's spirit with fear and dread, thus "fear fell upon him" = Zacharias was alone in the Holy place and the angel's appearance was sudden and unexpected; therefore, he was fearful; he was in the manifested presence of God.

b. The revelation. V. 13-17

V. 13

1. "The angel" = Gabriel. (verse 19)

2. "Him" = "thy" = "thee" = "thou" = Zacharias.

3. "Said" = to speak words Zacharias understood.

4. "Fear not" = do not be afraid.

5. "Thy prayer is heard" = this refers to some special supplication that had been offered to God perhaps time and time again before this day in the Holy place--in which he no doubt fulfilled his duty to the people of Israel by praying that the long looked for Messiah would hasten His coming.

6. "Thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" = the message of the angel.

7. "John" = name means the grace of Jehovah or Jehovah is a gracious giver.

V. 14

1. "Thou" = Zacharias and no doubt included Elisabeth.

2. "Shalt have joy and gladness" = these are kindred words; mean to be glad and rejoice exceedingly; no prospect was more gloomy to a Hebrew family than to die childless but now Zacharias and Elisabeth could have joy and gladness.

3. "And many shall rejoice at his (John's) birth" = this does not refer so much to the time of his birth but at a later time many (the Jewish nation and saints) will rejoice that he lived and was a blessing to mankind.

4. "Rejoice" = be glad; related to the Hebrew word which represents a young sheep or lamb skipping and frisking over the hills for joy.

V. 15

1. "He" = "his" = John.

2. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord" = means God would regard him as eminent—dignified, distinguished, separated from others by superior or extraordinary qualities and character; Jesus testified of this in Mat. 11:11.

3. "Shall drink neither wine nor strong drink" = this is equivalent to a Nazarite vow imposed by God upon John from his birth (Num. 6:2-8); this represents self-denial and abstinence.

4. "Wine" = the Greek word "oinos" and corresponds to the Hebrew word "yayin" both of which are general words used in the Scripture for any part of the fruit of the vine—grapes, grape juice, intoxicating drink, raisins, and vinegar; the context and principle of the bible determines what form is meant; in John 2 Jesus made grape juice, not an intoxicating wine for if He had made intoxicating wine He would have violated Scripture and would have been a sinner and not have qualified as our sin bearer. (Pro. 23:31)

5. "Strong drink" = an intoxicating beverage.

6. "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" = before Pentecost the Holy Ghost came upon a person to enable him to fulfill the ministry God gave him; in John's case this was foretold by the angel that John would be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; his ministry was to be a forerunner of the Messiah; to be filled with the Holy Ghost is to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by the Holy Ghost—all the days of his life.

V. 16

1. "The children of Israel" = the descendants of Israel or Jacob; called at this time Jews because Judah was the dominant tribe.

2. "Many. . . shall he (John) turn to the Lord their God" = the state of the people of this period of time was deplorable; the priests and scribes were for the most part (all except a remnant—a small number) deeply corrupted and the poor shepherdless common folk only too readily followed the example of the rich and great; vice and sensuality was on the rise; John would turn many back to the Lord their God by his influence as a human instrument—he was a great preacher of righteousness and repentance (Mat. 3:1-10); Jesus followed with the same message (Mat. 4:17); he shall call them from their sins and persuade them to forsake sin and cause them to seek the Lord their God—this is what the angel told Zacharias.

V. 17

1. "He" = John.

2. "Him" = refers to verse 16 "the Lord their God"—the Messiah—the Christ.

3. "He shall go before him" = John the Baptist was a forerunner of Christ.

4. "In the spirit and power of Elias" = the prophet Malachi (Mal. 4:5-6) predicted that Elijah (Elias, NT spelling) would be sent before the coming of the Messiah to prepare the way for Him; by this was evidently meant, not that he would appear in person, but that one should appear with a striking resemblance to him—in spirit and power; but the Jews understood it differently—they supposed that Elijah would appear in person for they even ask John this in John 1:21; John answered and said he was not Elias (Elijah)—that would be reincarnation; that is why Jesus said in Mat. 11:13-14, "If you will receive it" = implying that the affirmation that John was the promised Elijah, was a doctrine contrary to their expectation; John came in the spirit and power of Elias (Elijah).

5. Malachi's prophecy (Mal. 4:5-6) may have a literal fulfillment in the days of the Antichrist. (Rev. 11:3-12) One of these witnesses I believe to be Elijah, returned to complete his earthly life and armed, as before, with many mighty miracles.

6. "To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" = the Jewish descendants had developed many sects of their religion during this 400 year period when there was no open revelation (from Malachi to Matthew); these sects were the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians which are mentioned in the Bible and there were various other sects not mentioned; each was violently opposed to each other and pursued their opposition with great animosity; therefore, this opposition found its way into families and divided parents from their children; so John's ministry was to produce better feelings among them by directing them all to one Master—the Messiah who would restore their peace if they would repent (turn the hearts).

7. "And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" = "turn" applies to this phrase.

A. "The disobedient" = the unbelieving; the wicked.

B. He would turn "to the wisdom of the just" = or to such wisdom as the just would manifest.

8. "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord" = to prepare them for His coming by announcing that the Messiah was about to appear and by calling them to repentance.

9. God has always required men to be pure in a special manner when He was about to appear among them. The Israelites were required to purify themselves for three days when He was about to come down on Mount Sinai. (Exo. 19:14-15) Therefore, when God the Son was about to appear as the Redeemer, he required that men should prepare themselves for His coming. He requires that men should repent, believe, and be pure when He comes. (I Peter 4:7; II Peter 3:11-12; I John 3:1-3; I John 2:28)

10. It might just pay us to repent as a church and live clean so that He might come and save the lost.

c. The reluctance. V. 18

V. 18

1. Zacharias now speaks to the angel. "Whereby shall I know this" = "know" means to know by experience; he was desiring evidence that this promise would take place.

2. "For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years" = the reason he was doubting what the angel had said was because they both were past child bearing age and they were barren all these years in spite of all their prayers.

3. The testimony of an angel and the message coming in the Holy place of the Temple should have been proof enough. but men are slow to believe the testimony of heavenly messengers. So Zacharias finds all this hard to believe.

4. This reminds me of the story of Peter in prison. The church was praying and when God answered, Peter got out and knocked at the door where the church was praying. When it was announced that Peter was at the door knocking, the people who were praying could not believe it. (Acts. 12:12-16)

d. The rebuke. V. 19-20.

V. 19

1. "I am Gabriel" = name signifies man of God; a special messenger of good news.

2. "That stand in the presence of God" = a phrase denoting honor or favor from God.

3. "Sent to speak unto thee" = appointed and sent with special authority to act for another.

4. "To shew thee these glad tidings" = to announce glad tidings; to bring good news concerning the birth of John.

V. 20

1. Gabriel continues his message from God in this verse.

2. "Behold" = direct or fix your mind upon this.

3. "Thou" = Zacharias.

4. "Thou shalt be dumb" = unable to utter or articulate sounds - unable to speak.

5. "Until the day that these things shall be performed" = until the promise son be born; the duration of this time period would be nine months plus the time needed for conception to take place.

6. The reason for being unable to speak was "because thou believest not my (Gabriel's) words" = really God's words; this was both a sign and a judgment - a sign that Gabriel came from God, and that this thing would be fulfilled; and a judgment for not giving credit to what Gabriel had said which God had in essence said.

7. "Shall be fulfilled in their season" = the promise of a son would come to pass when Elisabeth's cycle of life was right for conception and then nine months of time before the boy would be born.

e. The restraint. V. 21â€²22

V. 21

1. "The people waited for Zacharias" = the people praying in the court without were in the habit of waiting until the priest on duty came out of the Holy place, after which they were dismissed with the blessing.
2. "Marvelled" = wondered; the delay in appearance of Zacharias puzzled and disturbed the worshipers.
3. "That he tarried so long in the temple" = the priest, it is said, was not accustomed to remain in the temple more than half an hour normally; Zacharias had tarried (delayed) longer and the people became alarmed.

V. 22

1. "He" = Zacharias.
2. "When he came out, he could not speak unto them" = he could not pronounce the usual blessing on the people.
3. "And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple" = they observed his actions and no doubt had seen the look upon his faceâ€²he was awe struck and rightly so for he had stood face to face with the angel Gabriel, who is forever in the presence of God and had heard a message sent directly from God.
4. "For" = introduces the reason that they perceived what they did.
5. "He beckoned unto them, and remained speechless" = Zacharias had made a sign to them by either nodding his head or making a motion with his hand, when they may have questioned him about seeing a vision; so he made a sign they could understand for he could not speak.

f. The rejoicing. V. 23â€²25

V. 23

1. "And it came to pass" = in the process of time.
2. "As soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished" = priest served in their course for a limited time and then were free to return to their homes; one might suppose that after what had happened in the temple would have caused him to leave his post and return home at once; but instead he fulfilled the duties of the week and then "he departed to his own house" = his house was in the hill country, probably not far from Jerusalem. (verse 39â€²40)

V. 24

1. "After those days" = referring to the days Zacharias had left to minister in the temple and the days according to the time cycle of life; then "his wife Elisabeth conceived" = to begin the formation of a fetus by the joining the male sperm with the female's egg.
2. "And hid herself five months" = her body needed rest and her soul needed quiet to prepare her for the awesome task of raising the one who would be the herald of the coming Messiah.

V. 25

1. This verse contains the words of Elisabeth.
2. "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*" = refers to the merciful manner the Lord had dealt with her "to take away my reproach among men" = by her conceiving, the shame of being childless was taken away; among the Jews, a family of children was counted a blessing, an evidence of the favor of God; to be childless was considered a reproach or a disgrace. (I Sam. 1:6)
3. No doubt there was joy in this household.

B. To Mary concerning the birth of Jesus. (V. 26-38)

1. The salutation to Mary. V. 26-37)

a. The messenger. (V. 26-28)

V. 26

1. "And in the sixth month" = the sixth month after Elisabeth's conception.
2. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God" = the same announcing archangel who was sent to Zacharias six months before; his name was Gabriel and his message was from God.
3. "Unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth" = Galilee was a region of northern Palestine—an area looked down on by the aristocrats in Jerusalem; Nazareth was a city in that region that the Jews had great contempt, for it was noted as a wicked place and those of that city were considered of bad character; in John 1:46 Nathanael was skeptical as to whether it was possible that the Messiah should come from a place considered wicked.

V. 27

1. "A virgin" = "Mary" = a marriageable maiden who has never had sexual relations with a man.
3. "Espoused" = to be promised in marriage; be betrothed—to promise or pledge one to be the future spouse of another; there was commonly an interval of 10 to 12 months among the Jews, between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the actual marriage; yet such was the nature of this engagement--unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery; during this time they were referred to as husband and wife even though the marriage ceremony had not taken place. (Mat. 1:18-19; note Joseph was called Mary's husband.)
3. "To a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David" = by the adopted right as the accounted son of Joseph, Jesus could claim the kingly heritage of the house of David; Mary as Jesus' Mother could also make this claim. (Luke 3:31-32)
4. Both of them, Joseph and Mary, were insignificant and poor despite their royal lineage.

V. 28

1. "And the angel came in unto her, and said" = Gabriel appeared to her and spoke directly to her.
2. "Hail" = a word of salutation equivalent to peace be with you.
3. "Her" = "*thou*" = "thee" = Mary.
4. "Art highly favoured" = refers to one who is a recipient of favored grace—by being the mother of the long-expected Messiah, the mother of the Redeemer of mankind.
5. "The Lord is with thee: blessed *art* thou among women" = the prayer of the angel; implies that all blessings from God would descend and rest upon her.

b. The message. V. 29-33

V. 29

1. "She" = "her" = Mary.
2. "*Him*" = "his" = Gabriel, the angel of God.
3. "When she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying" = disturbed or perplexed at what he said for it was so unexpected, so sudden, so extraordinary, and was so high an honor that she was filled with anxious thoughts.
4. "Cast in her mind" = thought or revolved in her mind.
5. "What manner of salutation this should be" = what sort of quality is this greeting; what does this

greeting mean?

V. 30

1. "Fear not, Mary" = do not be alarmed at the appearance of an angel; he was only going to announce good tidings; similar language was addressed to Joseph in Mat. 1:20.
2. "Thou hast found favour with God" = Mary was graced in being selected to be the mother of the Messiah.

V. 31

1. "Behold" = to observe with care; used to call special attention to what the angel is about to say.
2. "Thou" = "thy" = Mary.
3. "Conceive" = to begin the formation of a fetus by a miraculous miracle.
4. "Womb" = the part of the female anatomy where the fetus is conceived.
5. "And bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" = His name means Jehovah is salvation or Saviour; an angel told Joseph the same basic thing in Mat. 1:20-21.
6. The Lord is the giver of all conception. (Ruth 4:13; Psa. 127:3)

V. 32

1. "He" = "him" = "his" = "the Son of the Highest" = Jesus, the Son of God.
2. "He shall be great" = means He shall be distinguished - great in power, in wisdom, in dominion, on earth and in heaven.
3. "Shall be called the Son of the Highest" = shall be the Son of God; God is called the highest because He is exalted over His creatures on earth and in heaven; even called this by the demons in the maniac of Gadara. (Mark 5:6-7)
4. "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" = David is called His father because Jesus was descended from him (Mat. 1:1); David was promised in II Chron. 6:16, that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne, or that his throne should be perpetual; this will be fulfilled when the Lord comes back to this earth in Rev. 19 and sets up the millennium kingdom and will set upon His father David's throne.

V. 33

1. "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever" = He shall rule of the house of Israel (Jacob) for ever; this is referring to spiritual Israel - all who are saved - spiritual Jews in on the promise given to Abraham and David. (Rom. 2:28-29)
2. "And of his kingdom there shall be no end" = He shall reign among His people on earth until the 1000 year earthly reign is ended and then He will be their king forever in heaven.

c. The mystery. V. 34

V. 34

1. Mary questions the angel Gabriel.
2. "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"
 - A. "This" = refers to Gabriel's announcement that she was going to have a baby - son.
 - B. "Seeing" = since.

C. "Know" = means to know by experience; negated by "not;" this is a figure of speech used to refer modestly to sexual relations; since Mary had maintained her purity, bearing a child was naturally impossible.

3. Mary's question confirms the statement of her virginity in verse 27. Joseph had not yet officially taken her as his wife.

d. The method. V. 35

V. 35

1. Gabriel answers Mary's question .

2. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee" = Mat. 1:20 says "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;" this was a direct creation of divine power; a body was prepared pure and holy and free from the corruption of sin, in order that He would be qualified to do His great workâ€œoffering a pure sacrifice to God.

3. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" = this means that the body of Jesus would be created by the direct power of God; it was necessary that His human nature shall be pure and free from the corruption of the fall; God therefore prepared Him a body by direct creation that should be pure and holy (Heb. 10:5); the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, would overshadow (a figure of being covered by a cloud, similar to the Shekinah glory spoken of in the OT; Exo. 40:34) her producing the seed of life for her child.

4. "That holy thing which shall be born" = that holy child.

5. "Shall be called the Son of God" = so called for that was indeed what He would literally be because He was begotten in a supernatural manner.

6. God, not man, was His Father, the Holy Ghost's creative act in the body of Mary provided the physical means for the Incarnationâ€œGod robed in flesh.

e. The miracle. V. 36â€œ37

V. 36

1. "Behold" = used to call special attention to what he, Gabriel was about to say.

2. "Thy cousin Elisabeth, etc." = this was told Mary to encourage her to believe something so impossible from a human point of view; by the power of the Spirit her cousin Elisabeth had conceived six months before; though this was a natural conception, God's hand was involved because Elisabeth was well past the childâ€œbearing age; these words provided Mary comfort.

V. 37

1. This promise no doubt also brought Mary comfort as well. Mary could have been reminded what was told Sarah in Gen. 18:14.

2. God was and is capable of accomplishing anything He wills at any time and in any way He chooses. (Luke 18:27; Rom. 4:21)

2. The submission of Mary. V. 38

V. 38

1. "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" = the angel did not give her a command but a message to which now she, without hesitation, submitted to the will of God for her life; to be a handmaid of the Lord is to be submissive and obedient.

2. She was willing to risk disgrace and losing Joseph and any hopes for happiness in marriage. She laid her reputation in the community on the line when she surrendered to the will of God. Her very life was at stake. In those days, a woman found with child out of wedlock was to be stoned to death

under the law. (Deut: 22:23-24)

III. The three songs of praise. V. 39-80

A. The praise of Elisabeth to God. V. 39-45

1. The babe within Elisabeth. V. 39-41

V. 39-40

1. "And Mary arose in those days" = as soon as Mary heard the good news given by Gabriel concerning herself and her cousin Elisabeth, she started on a journey to visit her cousin. (verse 36)
2. "And went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda" = the region south of Jerusalem known as the hill country of Judea - believed to be this spelling "Juda;" the city is believed to be the city of Hebron which was a priestly city of refuge where Zacharias and Elisabeth may have dwelt; this city is about 80 miles from Nazareth like a crow would fly and no doubt farther like one would have to walk the winding trails; the song writer spoke of Hebron's lofty heights and Caleb had said give me this mountain that was promised to him at Kadesh. (Josh. 14:12-13)
3. She went "with haste" = swiftness; she wasted no time after hearing Gabriel's message.
4. She "saluted Elisabeth" = greeted her expressing great joy at seeing her and probably used the customary tokens of affectionate salutations - embracing and kissing.

V. 41

1. "It came to pass" = after a time of casual conversation - may have been only a short period of time.
2. "When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary" = refers to the announcement that she was to be the mother of the son of God.
3. "The babe" = John the Baptist - a six month old fetus did more than just move but "leaped in her womb" = to leap for joy.
4. "And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost" = "filled" = means to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally; the Holy Ghost filled her in the sense He controlled her - she was obedient.

2. The blessing from Elisabeth. V. 42-45

V. 42

1. "And she spake out with a loud voice" = she could not contain herself for two reasons - her baby leaping of joy at the announcement of the coming Messiah and she herself knowing that the long awaited Messiah was soon to be born.
2. "Blessed art thou among women" = Elisabeth pronounced a blessing on Mary for being chosen to bear the Messiah; this is about the same thing that the angel Gabriel said in verse 28.
3. "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb" = she also pronounced a blessing upon baby Jesus nine months before He was born.

V. 43

1. "And whence is this to me" = this is an expression of humility; she is saying, why is it "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"
2. "The mother of my Lord" = the word "Lord" denotes divinity, and sometimes superior, master, teacher, or governor; this title was given by the Jews to their expected Messiah; but whether they understood it as denoting divinity we cannot now be certain of; it is clear only that Elisabeth used it as denoting great dignity and honor.

V. 44

1. From this verse it is clear that Elisabeth testified to the fact that her own unborn child had recognized the truth and had responded as best he could.

V. 45

1. "And blessed is she that believed" = Elisabeth pronounced a blessing upon Mary because she believed what the angel spoke to her.
2. "For there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord" = Mary was blessed, not only in the act of believing, but because the thing promised would certainly be fulfilled.
3. Mary was blessed but she was not divine. To honor her above her Son Jesus Christ is idolatry.

B. The praise of Mary to God. V. 46-56

1. The testimony. V. 46-48

a. His condescension. V. 46-48

V. 46

1. "My soul doth magnify the Lord" = to magnify means to make great, and then to extol, to praise, to celebrate!
2. "Soul" = the seat of the feelings, desires, and affections.

V. 47

1. "My" = Mary.
2. "Spirit" = the part of man that is God conscience.
3. "Hath rejoiced" = to be exceedingly glad.
4. "God my Saviour" = God is called Saviour because He saves His people from sin and death (eternal); He was Mary's Saviour, as He had redeemed her and given her eternal life; so much for the so-called perfection of Mary—she was not sinless; using this term she acknowledged her need of a Saviour.
5. Therefore, she rejoiced in her being saved and especially for His mercy in honoring her by her being made the mother of the Messiah.
6. This verse refutes worship of Mary--Maryolatry.

V. 48

1. "For" = introduces the reason for her rejoicing.
2. "He" = "his" = God; verses 48-55 apply to God and can have a future prophetic application to the coming Messiah who is God as well.
3. "He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden" = the Lord had looked upon the low and humble condition of His handmaid; notwithstanding her humble rank and poverty, He had shown her favor.
4. "Handmaiden" = a female slave; a bondservant; equal to a servant—what Paul referred to himself as. (Rom. 1:1)
5. "Behold" = listen to what I am about to say.
6. "Henceforth" = from this time forth; hereafter; in consequence of this the coming Messiah who is God as well.

7. "All generations" = all men; all posterity.

8. "Shall call me blessed" = shall pronounce me highly favored or happy in being the mother of the Messiah; this does not give anyone authority to worship her or to pray to her; she is not claiming to be deity but just blessed by God.

9. Abraham was blessed in being the father of the faithful; Paul in being the apostle to the Gentiles; Peter in first preaching the gospel to them; but who would think of worshiping or praying to Abraham, Paul, or Peter?

b. His holiness. V. 49

V. 49

1. "He that is mighty" = "his" = God.

2. "Me" = Mary.

3. "Hath done to me great things" = hath conferred great favor and distinguished mercies.

4. "Holy is his name" = an expression of Mary's feelingsâ€”desiring to bestow on God all honor and praise; refers to God as being free from sin, injustices, and impurity.

c. His mercy. V. 50

V. 50

1. "His" = "him" = God.

2. "Mercy" = kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted joined with a desire to help them; refers to favor shown to the miserable and the guilty.

3. "Is on them" = is shown or manifested to them.

4. "Fear" = reverence; awe; refers to the reverential awe and respect of God with a hatred for evil.

5. "From generation to generation" = from one age to another; means His mercy is unceasingâ€”it continues and abounds.

6. Mary does not just think of God's mercy on herself, she thinks of others, and praises God that others also are made partakers of His mercy, and that His goodness is manifested to future generations as it has in the past.

d. His power. V. 51

V. 51

1. "He" = "his" = God.

2. "Hath shewed strength with his arm" = the arm is the symbol of strengthâ€”power; has His arm been revealed to you? (Isa. 53:1)

3. "The proud in the imagination of their hearts" = "proud" means conceit or the boastful expectations of which they were proud; refers to those who were lifted up or exalted in their own viewâ€”those who thought themselves to be superior to other men.

4. Those "he hath scattered" = He often had done it in time of battle and war; when the proud Assyrian, Egyptian, or Babylonian had come against the people of God, He had often scattered them and driven away their armies.

e. His sovereignty. V. 52â€”53

V. 52

1. "He" = God.

2. "He hath put down the mighty" = refers to princes, kings, or conquerors.
3. "From *their* seats" = their thrones, or the places where they sat in pomp and power.
4. "And exalted them" = raised them up or placed them in the seats of those who had been removed.
5. "Low degree" = refers to low or humble birth and condition of life. (Psa. 75:6-7)

V. 53

1. "He hath filled the hungry with good things" = this is a celebration of the general mercy of God; He had daily fed the poor, the needy, and those who came to Him with humble hearts.
2. "And the rich he hath sent away empty" = while the poor come to him for a supply of their daily needs, the rich come not that their necessities should be supplied, but come with lofty hearts and unsatisfied desires that their riches may be increased. (Pro. 23:5)

f. His faithfulness. V. 54-55

V. 54

1. "He" = "*his*" = God.
2. "Holpen" = old English word for helped; hath helped or assisted; properly means to take hold of one, to help him up when he is in danger of falling; here this means that God had aided His people when they were feeble, and were in danger of falling or being overthrown.
3. "His servant Israel" = His people, the Israelites or those who truly feared Him and kept His commandments--spiritual Israel. (Isa. 41:8-9)
4. "In remembrance of his mercy" = refers to the fact of His helping His people that His mercy may be remembered--to be recalled to one's mind.

V. 55

1. "As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed" = means He has dealt mercifully with the children of Israel, according as He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the promise referred to is that respecting the Messiah which was now about to be fulfilled.
2. "For ever" = these words refers to verse 54; denotes that the mercy of God manifested to His people should be had in everlasting remembrance--as He spake to Abraham. (Exo. 32:13)

2. The time. V. 56

V. 56

1. "Abode" = stayed with Elisabeth (her) "about three months" until the time baby John was to be born.
2. "And returned to her own house" = refers to Mary going back to her home in Nazareth.

C. The praise of Zacharias the father. V. 57-66

1. Zacharias the father. V.57-66

a. He is seen writing. V. 57-63

1) The celebration. V. 57-58

V. 57

1. At last the prediction of Gabriel was fulfilled. Elisabeth held in her own arms the promised baby boy.

2. The joy of the aged Elisabeth must have been extraordinary, because the birth of a child removed all her reproach among her neighbors—she was no longer childless. Also she gave birth to a boy and that was an occasion for great joy in Israel.

V. 58

1. No doubt when the neighbors and family heard of Zacharias' vision in the temple, they doubted whether it was so or not, but now the birth of Elisabeth's son set a seal upon the reality of the priest's vision.

2. "And they rejoiced with her" = their doubt was turned to joy.

2) The circumcision. V. 59

V. 59

1. "And it came to pass" = refers to eight days passed = "that on the eighth day."

2. "They came to circumcise the child" = relatives were invited to be present at this occasion, to witness that the child had been formally incorporated into the covenant; circumcision is the seal (rite or token) of the covenant made with Abraham and his descendants—a sign that faith had been applied in a coming Redeemer or in Christ. (Gen. 17:9–13)

3. "And they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father" = there was a custom when the child was circumcised that those gathered for the ceremony would name the child—the name commonly given to the eldest son was that of the father.

3) The confusion. V. 60–61

V. 60

1. "And his mother answered and said, Not so" = it is evident that Zacharias had communicated with Elisabeth what the angel Gabriel had said—this communication was probably done by Zacharias writing the vision down for Elisabeth to read even before she conceived.

2. "He shall be called John" = she interrupted the ceremony with a bold statement of which Gabriel had spoken.

3. "John" = name means the grace of Jehovah or Jehovah is a gracious giver.

V. 61

1. The guests are surprised.

2. "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name" = the Jewish tribes and families were kept distinct, so to do that and avoid confusion they probably gave only those names which were found among their ancestors; also this showed respect which was felt for honored parents and ancestors.

4) The confirmation. V. 62–63

V. 62

1. "They" = the neighbors and relatives present at John's birth.

2. "Made signs" = to signify or express by a nod or a sign; this makes it clear that the old priest was afflicted with deafness as well as dumbness.

3. "His" = "him" = John.

4. "He" = "father" = Zacharias.

5. "How he would have him called" = what name he would give the boy; no doubt he had previously

written down to Elisabeth what the boy's name should be as Gabriel had said in verse 13.

V. 63

1. "He" = Zacharias.
2. "Asked for a writing table" = a small tablet to write on; since he could not speak he asked by signs; the tablets in use generally at this time were made of wood, covered with a thin coating of wax; the instrument used for writing was an iron stylus pen by which they marked on the wax that covered the tablet.
3. He wrote "His name is John" = the name already given him by God.
4. "And they marvelled all" = refers to all that were present at John's birth and tried to name him Zacharias; they marveled at the boy being named John since none of their kindred bore that name; marvelled refers to that which arrests the attention and causes a person to stand or gaze to be awe struck.

b. He is seen worshiping. V. 64-66

V. 64

1. "His" = "he" = Zacharias.
2. "His mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake" = for a little over nine months he had been dumb unable to speak; for one act of disbelief all this calamity had come upon him.
3. "And praised God" = to celebrate with praises; with true gratitude he offered praise to God for the birth of a son and no doubt for his restoration to the blessings of speech.

V. 65

1. "And fear came on all, etc." = fear refers to reverence of God; for nine months Zacharias had been unable to speak and it was probable that the neighbors, relatives, and all those who lived around his home supposed that he had been afflicted with a paralytic affliction and that he would not recover.
2. Now the fact that Zacharias' speech was suddenly restored convinced them that God was there, and filled their minds with awe and veneration.
3. "These sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea" = this miracle was the talk of the town and surrounding area; perhaps Luke learned of these facts through talking with some of the people who lived in the hill country eyewitnesses. (verse 2)

V. 66

1. "They" = "their" = refers to all the people in the hill country that heard the sayings noised about. (verse 65)
2. They not only heard them but also "laid them up in their heart" = they kept them in their hearts which means to guard them and continually recall them to mind so as to understand.
3. "What manner of child shall this be!" = the people were of the opinion that John would be a prophet and great events would result from his life; this was due to the remarkable circumstance of his birth that they had laid hold of.
4. "And the hand of the Lord was with him (John)" = this expression means that God aided him, protected him, or showed him favor; some think that these words are a part of the speech of the neighbors; but if that is not the case it was still true concerning John.

2. Zacharias, the foreteller. V. 67-80

a. His prophecy concerning his Saviour. V. 67-75

1) The birth of Jesus assures the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. V. 67-72

V. 67

1. "His father" = John's father - Zacharias.
2. "Was filled with the Holy Ghost" = means to cause to abound, to furnish, or to supply liberally; the Holy Ghost filled him in the sense He controlled him; implies a special control and preparation by the Spirit for delivering a message from God.
3. "Prophesied" = to speak forth by divine inspiration; the word does not apply exclusively to prediction, but may refer to the declaration of God's message for men, whether it relates to the past, the present, or the future - the context reveals to which the prophecy applies.

V. 68

1. "Blessed" = to speak highly of; is from a Greek word from which we get our English word eulogize and means to speak well of.
2. "Be the Lord God of Israel" = Zacharias connects the heart of his prophecy with the God of the OT.
3. "He" = "his" = God.
4. "For" = introduces the reason Zacharias was speaking well of God.
5. "For he hath visited" = means properly to look upon; to know the state of anyone, then to visit for the purpose of aiding those who need aid or alleviating misery; after 400 years of silence and absence (no open revelation), the Holy One of Israel had again come to His people; He came to relieve their misery and brought salvation - "redeemed his people" = means He hath made a ransom for His people; Zacharias spoke not only of the present but also of the future as if it were already accomplished; the birth of John the Baptist was evidence that the work was begun and as good as done.
6. Zacharias recognized in the birth of John the beginnings of the fulfillment of the coming of the Messiah.

V. 69

1. "Hath raised up an horn of salvation for us" = "horn" = is the symbol of strength; this phrase means that this strength or this mighty Redeemer was able to save; this is the mighty deliverer the Jewish people had anticipated for so long; note the construction - the work was begun and was as good as done.
2. "In the house of his servant David" = clearly Zacharias looked on Mary, as the angel had done (verse 32) as belonging to the royal house of David; thus this reference is not referring to John because both Zacharias and Elisabeth were of the tribe of Levi, not Judah; this deliverer would be of the descent and sovereignty of David, Israel's great king - fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. (II Sam. 7:16)

V. 70

1. "He" = "his" = God.
2. "He spake by the mouth of his holy prophets" = the OT prophets were God's mouth piece and all are said to have referred to the Messiah; examples: Enoch, before the flood (Jude 14), Jacob (Gen. 49:10), Moses (Deut. 18:15), and Isaiah (Isa. 9:6-7)
3. "Which have been since the world began" = this is not to be taken literally, for there were no prophets immediately after creation; this is merely a general expression, designed to denote that all the prophets had predicted the coming of the Messiah. (John 5:39-40)

V. 71

1. Zacharias spoke this referring to what the prophets had spoken. (verse 70)
2. "That we should be saved from our enemies" = Israel's worst enemy was the iron hand of Rome; no doubt Zacharias may have thought that was what he was talking about; yet the enemies of man are his sins, his lusts, and the great adversary--Satan and his angels (demons), who continually seek to destroy him; from these the Messiah came to save us.
3. "And from the hand of all that hate us" = this phrase may indicate the iron hand of Rome which crushed the Jews; the future coming of the Antichrist will have all mankind by the throat, but the Messiah will put an end to all of that.

V. 72

1. "To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers" = to show mercy promised to our fathers; fulfilling the promise made to the fathers was shown in His blessing the nation--now descendants of the fathers; this blessing is the coming of the Messiah, promised years before to the fathers.
2. "And to remember his holy covenant" = refers to the promise made to Abraham and his descendants--as the following verses clearly show.

2) The birth of Jesus assures the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. V. 73-75

V. 73

1. "The oath" = His holy covenant (verse 72) was an oath in which God swore by Himself (because He could swear by no greater, Heb. 6:13-14) that he would surely bless Abraham and his posterity. (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:16-17)
2. That promise was now to be entirely fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah.

V. 74

1. "He" = "him" = God.
2. "Would grant" = bestow the blessings promised Abraham and his descendants.
3. "Us" = "we" = "our" = the descendants of Abraham; really includes his spiritual descendants. (Rom. 2:28-29)
4. Because of what He has done "delivered out of the hand of our enemies," we "might serve him" = might obey, honor, and worship Him; this was what was promised.
5. Therefore, we should serve Him:
 - A. "Without fear" = refers to fear of death, of spiritual enemies, and of external foes; this should be done in the sure hope of God's eternal favor beyond the grave.

V. 75

- B. "In holiness" = piety towards God; has to do with maintaining a right relationship with God; set apart unto God; sanctification; purification. (Heb. 12:14)
 - C. "In righteousness" = the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory (means of atonement) death of Jesus Christ; has to do with maintaining a right relationship toward man.
1. "Before him" = in the presence of God.
 2. "All the days of our life" = until our death; all saved will be "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29); this is a work of sanctification--the walk of progression toward perfection which will be gained at the first resurrection.

b. His prophecy concerning his son. V. 76-80

1) He will prepare the way of the Lord. V. 76

V. 76

1. We can see Zacharias, as he stooped down to the cradle to raise his son John in his arms, speaking directly to the little child = "thou, child;" he did not address him by name for the human relationship was not as important as the ministry John would have. (Mat. 1:23; Isa. 40:3-5)
2. "Shalt be called the prophet of the Highest" = a prophet of God; a prophet appointed by God to declare His will, and to prepare the way of the coming Messiah.
3. "Thou" = John the Baptist.
4. "His" = the Lord-the Messiah.
5. "For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:"
 - A. "The face of the Lord" = the Lord Jesus.
 - B. To "go before the face of the Lord" = is the same as to go immediately before Him.
 - C. "To prepare his ways" = to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah, like a herald going before an army on the march, to make preparations for its coming.

2) He will proclaim the words of the Lord. V. 77-80

V. 77

1. "To give knowledge of salvation" = knowledge of the way of deliverance; to make known it was provided and that the author of salvation was about to appear.
2. "Unto his people" = Israel, His chosen people.
3. "By the remission of their sins" = "remission" = means pardon or forgiveness; this implies that God will treat the sinner as if he had not committed the sin.
4. The very notion of salvation was falsified in Israel, and had to be corrected before salvation could be realized. Israel was plagued by the cold, dead formalism and tradition of the various sects of religion that had been established during the dark time from Malachi to Matthew when no open revelation had come--about 400 years. The people had an idea of political deliverance rather than moral deliverance; therefore, there is a need for John to come on the scene to give knowledge (understanding) of the deliverance needed.

V. 78

1. "Through the tender mercy of our God" = refers to the compassion, kindness, and good will toward the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help (deliver) them.
2. "Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us" = refers to the Messiah; "dayspring" is an old term for sunrise and refers to the rising of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2); note the tense-so sure to happen, it is as good as done; refers to the light of the gospel shining forth from heaven to:

V. 79

1. "To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death" = this is an expression denoting great ignorance; as in darkness we can see nothing, and know not where to go, so those who are ignorant of God and their duty are said to be in darkness; the instruction which removes this ignorance is called light.
2. "To guide our feet into the way of peace" = this figure is taken from travelers, who, being overtaken by night, know not what to do, and who wait patiently for the morning light that they may

know which way to go; when the light shined brightly on his way the road was open to the promised land of restâ€”heaven.

3. It seems that Zacharias saw beyond the narrow horizon of Israel and that here he caught sight of the distant far reaching isles of the Gentiles, over which so deep a darkness brooded for ages.

V. 80

1. In this verse Luke covers about 30 years of John's life with little fanfare.

2. "And the child grew" = speaks of his physical stature.

3. "And waxed strong in spirit" = "wax" means to increase, to grow; refers to being made strong in courage, understanding, and purposes of good, fitting him for his future work.

4. "Was in the deserts" = in the wilderness or barren places around Hebron in the hill country where his father resided; we do not have a record of what age he was when his father and mother diedâ€”they were stricken in years when he was born; no doubt he was alone at an early age, dwelt in obscurity, and was not known publicly by the people.

5. "Until the day of his shewing unto Israel" = until he entered on his public ministry (Luke 3:2â€”3), which was when he was 30 years of age.

6. We know nothing else about the first 30 years of his life.

CHAPTER 2:

I. Bethlehem. V. 1â€”21

A. Jehovah's Son is born. V. 1â€”7

1. The decree by Caesar. V. 1â€”5

a. The law. V. 1â€”3

V. 1

1. "And it came to pass" = an expression showing that time had elapsed and nothing was recorded that happened in those days; this is about six months after John the Baptist was born.

2. "In those days" = about the time of the birth of Christ.

3. "There went out a decree" = a law commanding a thing to be done.

4. "Caesar Augustus" = the Roman emperor at this time; he was the nephew of Julius Caesar.

5. "All the world" = refers to the land of Palestine.

6. "Should be taxed" = Augustus had ordered a census which would serve as a basis for taxation; the word means an enrollment or registration in the public records of persons together with their income and property, as a basis of a census or valuation, that it might appear how much tax should be levied upon each one.

6. Herod was the king of Judea, yet he held his appointment under the Roman emperor and was subject in most matters to him. Judea was at this time tributary to Rome.

V. 2

1. This verse is in parenthesis to explain the time of this census.

2. "(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) = there is much disagreement in history concerning this statement; some say one thing and some another; I am going to say this is God's inspired word (II Tim. 3:16) and leave it as it is; it is believed that Cyrenius was governor of Syria two separate times and he was the one who headed up this census taking two timesâ€”one here and another recorded in Acts 5:37. (Rom. 3:4)

V. 3

1. "All went to be taxed" = all of Palestine obeyed the Emperor's command.
2. "Every man into his own city" = each man went back to the city of his ancestors, where his family records were kept.

b. The location. V. 4-5

V. 4

1. "Joseph" = "he" = Mary's espoused husband.
2. "Also" = indeed; he obeyed the command.
3. "Went up" = traveling from Nazareth into Judea would be ascending elevation.
4. "Galilee" = region north of Samaria by the sea of Galilee.
5. "City of Nazareth" = where the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary; home to both Joseph and Mary.
6. "Into Judaea" = the southern region of Palestine; area around Jerusalem.
7. "The city of David, which is called Bethlehem" = called the city of David because it was the place of King David's birth.
8. "Because he was of the house and lineage of David" = the reason Joseph went to Bethlehem.
 - A. "Of the house" = of the family.
 - B. "And lineage" = denotes that he was a descendent of David.

V. 5

1. "To be taxed with Mary" = under Roman law all women as well as men had to be registered and pay taxes; it was not necessary for a wife to go personally for registration, but Mary chose to journey with Joseph to Bethlehem; no doubt he did not want to leave her behind where she might have been subjected to gossip and insult; also the townspeople could have surmised that Joseph had abandoned her if he left her behind; the main reason was that this was the will of God.
2. "His espoused wife" = to be promised in marriage; be betrothed; Luke speaks of them as being in the engaged state although the marriage ceremony of Mary and Joseph had taken place (Mat. 1:24-25); they did not cohabit until after Jesus' birth; the fact of their legal marriage is assured or Mary would not have been able to accompany Joseph on this journey.
3. "Being great with child" = she was nearing her delivery date.
4. Caesar's command was a part of divine providence in arranging for the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem as prophesied long before in Micah 5:2. Caesar did not know that he was being used of God. I also doubt that Joseph connected the promise in Micah to this journey which was about 65 miles the way a bird would fly and much longer to walk the hills and curves. Also the last thing Mary would want to do in her condition was to travel 65 miles on a donkey's back. But she had said in Luke 1:38, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord."

2. The delivery by Mary. V. 6-7

V. 6

1. "So it was, that, while they were there" = we do not know how long they were there in Bethlehem; probably the first night there, her due date arrived.
2. "The days were accomplished that she should be delivered" = refers to Mary giving birth to Jesus.

V. 7

1. "She" = "her" = Mary, the highly favored virgin chosen of God to give a fleshly body to the Son of God—the Messiah.
2. "Brought forth" = one word in the Greek; refers to a woman giving birth.
3. "Her firstborn Son" = "him" = Jesus the Messiah; this indicates that Mary and Joseph had other children born after Jesus; Mark 6:3 gives the names of four brothers of Jesus and mentions sisters—plural, thus He had at least two sisters.
4. "And wrapped him in swaddling clothes" = one word in the Greek; refers to binding tight with probably a soft piece of cloth that confined the limbs closely—normal procedure for infants in that day and our day as well.
5. "Him" = Jesus the virgin born Son of God.
6. "Laid him in a manger" = a place where cattle were fed; in a stable.
7. "Because" = introduces the reason they were in the stable = "there was no room for them in the inn."
8. "Them" = Joseph and Mary.
9. The inn was a lodging place for travelers but it was filled to capacity due to the large number of people coming to the city of Bethlehem to register for tax purposes. Some suggest that the innkeeper was awful to send an expectant mother to the stable but he gave them the best that he had. The stable was a cave joined to the inn where the animals were kept. It seems that Joseph and Mary were alone the night she gave birth to Jesus. There was no attending physician or midwife. It was under these conditions that Jesus became flesh. (John 1:14)

B. Judah's shepherds are briefed. V. 8–21

1. They watch. V. 8

V. 8

1. "In the same country" = round about Bethlehem.
2. "Shepherds" = men who attended flocks of sheep.
3. "Abiding in the field" = remaining outdoors, under the open sky with their flock.
4. "Keeping watch over their flock by night" = tending their flock by turns through the night watches.
5. The Lord did not let us know the exact date of this birth. There are many variations of this date discussed and debated, but the actual date is not put in print. The reason being the Lord did not want us to celebrate Jesus birth as much as we should glory in His sacrifice paid on Calvary's cross. (Gal. 6:14)
6. I think He was born around the first of March, because He began His ministry at 30 years of age. He was baptized and immediately He was tempted (Mark 1:12) for 40 days and the third day after His temptation He attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee. (John 2:1) He then spent a few days at Capernaum. (John 2:12) Then he went up to Jerusalem to attend the passover, fulfilling the OT law of males attending the passover feast (John 2:13) which was April 14. Thus when you do the math you come up with the last of February or March 1.
7. It is not important to know the time—if it was, God would have preserved the record of it.

2. They wonder. V. 9–14

a. The reassurance of the angel of the Lord. V. 9–10

V. 9

1. "Lo" = this word is used to excite particular attention in a hearer to some subject of discourse.
2. "The angel" = an angel.
3. "Came upon them" = suggests a sudden appearance.

4. "The glory of the Lord shone round about them" = the white shining cloud of intolerable brightness, known among the Jews as the Shechinah—the visible token of the manifested presence of the Eternal God.
5. "Them" = "they" = the shepherds.
6. "They were sore afraid" = to be struck with fear; to be seized with alarm; the terror felt by the shepherds was the natural awe felt by man when brought into visible communion with the dwellers of the spirit-world.

V. 10

1. "The angel" = "I" = the one referred to in verse 9; a heavenly messenger; we do not know his name, but his mission is clear.
2. "Them" = "you" = the shepherds of verse 8.
3. "Said" = to speak in the native language of the shepherds so there could be no misunderstanding.
4. "Fear not" = do not be afraid; this was the usual greeting to anyone to whom such an appearance would be unexpected and terrifying. (Luke 1:13, 30)
5. "Behold" = used to call special attention to what the angel is about to say.
6. "For" = introduces the reason they should not fear.
7. "Bring good tidings" = one word in the Greek; to announce good news.
8. "Of great joy" = "joy" means gladness; described as "great" = expressing a large or unusual degree of any thing.
9. "Which shall be to all people" = refers primarily to Israel who were looking for the Messiah; has an application to all who accept the message.

b. The revelation by the angel of the Lord. V. 11-12

1) In regard to God's Son. V. 11

V. 11

1. "Unto you" = the shepherds and the people of God.
2. "Is born" = word refers to a woman giving birth—this is the virgin birth, the Incarnation—God robed in flesh.
3. "This day" = the birth had just occurred.
4. "In the city of David" = Bethlehem; prophesied in Micah 5:2.
5. "A Saviour" = deliverer; means He would deliver His people from sin and restore the nation.
6. "Which is Christ" = the anointed One; the Messiah of the OT; as Christ He would be God's anointed Prophet, Priest, and King.
7. "Lord" = supreme in authority; Master; as Lord, He would be not only Master, but a revelation of God Himself; He would be their divine Lord and in Him we see the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God's person.

2) In regard to God's sign. V. 12

V. 12

1. "This *shall* be a sign unto you" = a wonder or unusual occurrence—the evidence, by which the shepherds would know the child, is that "ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."
2. "Wrapped in swaddling clothes" = refers to binding tight with probably a soft piece of cloth that

confined the limbs closelyâ€”normal procedure for newborn infants in that day; thus this was not the sign.

3. "Lying in a manger" = a trough where cattle were fed in a stable; this was the sign; certainly the shepherds would find no other newly born infant cradled in a mangerâ€”an unusual occurrence.

4. The angel just told the shepherds where Christ was but he did not tell them to go and see Him.

c. The rejoicing by the angels of the Lord. V. 13â€”14

V. 13

1. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host " = angels; the troop of angels issues forth from the depths of that invisible world which surrounds us on every side; in several passages of the Scriptures is the enormous multitude of these heavenly hosts noticed. (Psa. 68:17; Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:11)

2. "Praising God" = to extol; to sing praises in honor to God.

3. "And saying" = the next verse records what the angels said.

V. 14

1. "Glory to God" = praise be to God; honor be to God.

2. "In the highest" = refers to the third heaven, the dwelling place of God.

3. "On earth peace" = the gospel will bring peace; the Saviour was predicted as the Prince of peace (Isa. 9:6); the world is at war with God; sinners are at enmity against their Maker and against each other, but Jesus came to make peace; the angels did not understand the message of the gospel. (I Peter 1:10â€”12)

4. "Good will toward men" = the gift of the Saviour is an expression of good will or love to men, therefore, God is to be praised.

5. This celestial spectacle was very likely seen by the shepherds alone. There is no indication that others saw even a glow in the Judean sky.

3. They worship. V. 15â€”16

V. 15

1. "And it came to pass" = in the process of time; refers to only a short time after "the angels were gone away from them (shepherds) into heaven" = the shepherds saw the heavenly host going away into heaven.

2. "The shepherds said one to another" = they were all in agreement.

3. "Let us now go" = they didn't want to wait until daylight; they left their flocks to fend for themselves or in the care of servants and made a beeline "unto Bethlehem" = the city of David, where the angel had told them they would find the Saviour.

4. "And see this thing which is come to pass" = the shepherds did not doubt the reality of the angel's proclamation, but accepted it at face value and acted accordinglyâ€”a fulfillment of the long awaited Messiah.

5. "Which the Lord hath made known unto us" = the message come from the mouth of an angel, God's servant, but the shepherds knew this was the Lord's message.

V. 16

1. "They" = the shepherds who heard the message.

2. "Came with haste" = speed; swiftness; implies to desire earnestly; application: when one is told of

Jesus by the messengers of Godâ€™â€™preachersâ€™â€™and that one has an ear to hear, they should be like the shepherdsâ€™â€™forsake all, and seek to find Him as they are enabled by the Holy Spiritâ€™â€™make hasteâ€™â€™active waiting.

3. And they "found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger" = the Greek construction indicates they did not find the baby Jesus in the manger right away, but they searched eagerly until they did--it was the same night.

4. The unsaved can learn a valuable lesson from these shepherdsâ€™â€™seek Him until you find Him.

4. They witness. V. 17â€™21

a. The confirming. V. 17â€™18

V. 17

1. "They" = "them" = the shepherds.
2. "When they had seen *it*" = "*it*" is in italics, thus supplied by the translators referring to the sign of baby Christ lying in a manger; the angel spoke of this in verse 12.
3. "They made known abroad the saying which was told them" = they proclaimed everywhere they went that the Messiah had come.
4. "Concerning this child" = this was the emphasis in the words of the shepherds; not on what it was like to see an angel or hear a great angelic choir, nor was it on the fear they felt on being surrounded by a dazzling light from heaven; the main interest was on reporting what was told them concerning this child.

V. 18

1. "Wondered" = to be affected by surprise and admiration.
2. "They that heard *it*" = the people who heard the shepherds tell what they had seen; the Greek construction indicates that the shepherd's report caused a flash of amazement and wonder among the people.
3. Part of this wonder may have been due to their attitude toward shepherds. Shepherding was considered a somewhat unscrupulous and rough occupation in firstâ€™century Palestine. In the eyes of the elite it was scandalous that God would reveal such truth to a group they considered less than honorable. Yet the common people were delighted and overwhelmed that God had announced to all that salvation was at hand.
4. Even though many were amazed at their message, we do not find a record of any others going to the stable to see the baby Messiah.
5. We do find a record of the wise men coming to Bethlehem to see the young child in a house when he was almost two years old. (Mat. 2:1â€™12) The wise men saw His star in the east and came to Jerusalem to see the kingâ€™â€™they did not follow the star to Jerusalem. After learning where the Messiah would be born, they followed the star from Jerusalem to the house in Bethlehem where Jesus was. We know Jesus was just under two years of age because Herod enquired when they saw the star (Mat. 2:7) and then he killed all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age killed. (Mat. 2:16)
6. I want to expose another error that men have concerning the wise men. The Bible does not say there were three. We do not know how many there were.

b. The contemplating. V. 19

V. 19

1. "Mary" = the mother of Jesus.
2. "Kept all these things" = to keep in her mind all these thingsâ€™â€™1) what the angel Gabriel told her, 2) what had happened to Elizabeth, 3) what had happened to the shepherds, and 4) all the extraordinary circumstances which had attended the birth of her son.

2. "Pondered them in her heart" = to weigh in the mind; she thought of these things often and anxiously.

c. The continuing. V. 20

V. 20

1. "The shepherds returned" = to their flocks.
2. "Glorifying" = to extol; to magnify; to celebrate.
3. "Praising" = to sing praises in honor to God.
4. "For all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" = reason for praising God—they had found the Messiah exactly as God through His angel (messenger) had told them.

d. The circumcising. V. 21

V. 21

1. "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child" = as godly Jews, the parents of Jesus circumcised Him on the eighth day in keeping with the Law (Gen. 17:12; 21:4; Lev. 12:2); "circumcision" is the seal (rite or token) of the covenant made with Abraham and his descendants—a sign that faith had been applied by the parents in a coming redeemer or in Christ (many did it as a custom and not a reality as baptism is practiced today); in the case of Mary she devotedly submitted herself and her baby to the ancient customs—she willingly was obedient to the Divine law under which she was born and hitherto had lived.
2. "His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb" = both Mary and Joseph had been told that Jesus was God's own choice of a name for the child. (Luke 1:31; Mat. 1:18–21)
3. The circumcision seems to have taken place in Bethlehem.

II. Jerusalem. V. 22–38

A. Jesus' first recorded temple visit. V. 22–38

1. His dedication. V. 22–24

V. 22

1. "And when the days of her purification according to law were accomplished" = this seems to have involved 41 days (Lev. 12:2–4; 7 days unclean, eighth day circumcised, then 33 days in the blood of her purifying = 41 days); some commentaries say 40 days; this was "according to law" = OT law of Moses; Luke mentions this six times in this verse and the following verses; his intent was to make clear that Jesus was born under the law; He, Himself, did not need to be redeemed; He was immaculately (with spotless purity) conceived, sinlessly born, and wholly free from sin; He had come to fulfill all the demands of the law so He was circumcised and ceremonially "redeemed" to identify Himself with us.
2. "They" = Joseph and Mary.
3. "Brought him" = Jesus.
4. "To Jerusalem" = to the temple; this was a short journey from Bethlehem.
5. "To present *him* to the Lord" = as required by law in Num. 18:15.

V. 23

1. This verse is in parenthesis to explain the reason for the dedication of Jesus.
2. "As it is written" = quoting the OT Scripture found in Exo. 13:2, 12; the tense in the Greek is the

perfect tense which refers to a past completed action with existing results; indicates it was written down in time past and is still on record today. (Psa. 119:89; Mat. 24:35)

3. "In the law of the Lord" = in the OT Scripture.

4. "Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord" = refers to all firstborn males who were considered holy which means set apart for the Lordâ€™â€™dedicated to God for a special service; Jesus' parents recognized Him as the Messiah and dedicated Him to this service.

V. 24

1. "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord" = at the end of the time of her purification she was to present a sacrifice at the Temple and then was ceremonially cleansed.

2. "A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" = the sacrifice offered was in proportion to the financial ability of the family (Lev. 12:6, 8); the proper offering was a lamb for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or dove for a sin offering; but for the poor an alternative was allowedâ€™â€™instead of the more costly present of a lamb, a second pigeon or dove might be brought; the offering of the birds indicates that Joseph and Mary were poor.

3. This let's us know that everybody (whosoever) could present what was required, for all could catch a pigeon or dove and present a sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord made a way for all if they will only obey.

4. By Mary making this offering she showed it is not dishonorable to be poor. No station is dishonorable where God places us. He knows what is best for us, and He often makes a state of poverty an occasion of the highest blessings.

2. The testimony of Simeon. V. 25â€™35

a. His reassurance. V. 25â€™26

V. 25

1. "Behold" = used to call attention to what is about to be stated.

2. "There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon" = "Simeon" was a common name among the Jews; there is much speculation in commentaries as to who this man was but all we really know about him is what is recorded here.

3. "The same man was just" = righteous before God and man; approved by God as a righteous man, and discharging faithfully his duty to man.

4. "Devout" = religious; piousâ€™â€™reverencing and honoring God; expresses the idea of good reputation, well received or of high standing among the people.

5. "Waiting for the consolation of Israel" = waiting for the Messiah, who is called the consolation of Israel because He would give comfort to them at His appearing; there was a general feeling among the more earnest Jews at this time that the first advent of the Messiah would not be long delayed and that He would deliver the Jews from their oppressors.

6. "And the Holy Ghost was upon him" = this is an indication, not only of his prophetic empowerment, but also of his ongoing devout character.

V. 26

1. "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost" = indicates divine admonition or instruction; the specific mode of the revelation (could have been by a dream, vision, voice, insight, etc.â€™â€™true in OT time but not today; Heb. 1:1â€™2) is not known, but the means of the revelation was by the Holy Ghost.

2. "Holy Ghost" = same as Holy Spirit; the third part of the Trinity or Godhead.

3. "That he should not see death" = should not himself die; to see death or taste death was common

among the Hebrews of expressing death itself.

4. "Before he had seen the Lord's Christ" = refers to the Anointed One of God—the Messiah. (Psa. 2:2)

5. Simeon is believed to be an aged man—older than expected to live. To this aged man, who had been long waiting for the Messiah, how grateful must have been this revelation—this solemn assurance that the Messiah was near.

b. His recognition. V. 27–32

V. 27

1. "He" = Simeon.
2. "And he came by the Spirit" = his action this day was directed by the Holy Spirit.
3. "Into the temple" = into that part of the temple where the public worship was chiefly performed—into the court of the women.
4. "The parents" = refers to Joseph and Mary; no doubt Joseph had adopted Jesus as his son.
5. "When the parents brought in the child Jesus" = "him" = just a baby about 41 days old; God in flesh.
6. "To do for him after the custom of the law" = to make an offering for Mary's purification and present Him to God.

V. 28

1. "Then took he him up in his arms" = Simeon being led by the Spirit searched the crowd over as no doubt he had done before, but now when he saw Jesus, the Spirit let him know "that's Him" and Simeon took up the child Jesus in his arms.
2. "And blessed God" = to thank or praise God; to speak highly of; is from a Greek word from which we get our English word eulogize and means to speak well of; it is a different word from "blessed" in the beatitudes which means happy in the sense of being spiritually prosperous.
3. "And said" = recorded what he said in verses 29–32.

V. 29

1. "Lord" = "thou" = "thy" = Master.
2. "Now lettest" = now Thou dost let or permit; the Greek construction signifies that God was permitting him to die in peace; "now" by coming first in the sentence, emphasizes that the salvation of Israel had arrived with the coming of Jesus to the temple.
3. "Thy servant" = a slave of the Lord; Simeon considered himself a watchman who had successfully carried out his duty.
4. "Depart in peace" = phrase is used of death; giving the impression that Simeon was an elderly man not far from death; phrase can also mean "release" or "dismissal" as from an assignment or task.
5. "According to thy word" = refers to the promise made by revelation of the Holy Ghost; God never disappoints; to many it might have appeared improbable, when such a promise was made to an old man, that it should be fulfilled; but God fulfils all His word, keeps all His promises, and never disappoints those who trust in Him.

V. 30

1. "For" = introduces the reason he could depart in peace.
2. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" = Simeon said he saw with his own eyes Him who is to obtain

salvation for His peopleâ€”the Saviour.

V. 31

1. "Thou" = the Lord.
2. "Which" = refers to salvation in verse 30.
3. "Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people" = refers to salvation the Lord has provided for all peopleâ€”includes the Gentiles as well as the Jews as the next verse brings out.

V. 32

1. "A light to lighten the Gentiles" = this is in accordance with the prophecies in the OT (Isa. 49:6); Gentiles are represented as sitting in darknessâ€”that is, in ignorance and sin; Christ is a light to them, as by Him they will be made acquainted with the character of the true God, His law, and the plan of redemption.
2. "And the glory of thy people Israel" = the first offer of salvation was made to the Jews (Rom. 1:16; Luke 24:47); Jesus was born among the Jews; to them had been given the prophecies respecting Him, and His first ministry was among them; therefore, He was their glory, their honor, their light.
3. No doubt Luke, a Gentile, must have been specially interested in Simeon's prophecy.

c. His revelation. V. 33â€”35

1) Concerning the Messiah. V. 33â€”34

V. 33

1. "Marvelled" = means to wonder; that which arrests the attention and causes a person to stand or gaze; it was not so much that Simeon foretold new things concerning the Child Jesus that caused them to marvel; their surprise was that a stranger should possess so deep an insight concerning Jesus.
2. Mary and Joseph had both been told by an angel who Jesus was, so now they marvel that their secret was known by another.
3. "Him" = Simeon.
4. "Things which were spoken of him" = refers to the things Simeon said (verses 29â€”32) while holding baby Jesus in his hands.

V. 34

1. "Blessed them" = to ask God's blessings on Joseph and Mary; he refrains from blessing the Child for it was not for one like Simeon to speak words of blessing over the Son of the Highest.
2. "And said unto Mary his mother" = the words which follow are expressly stated to have been addressed only to Mary.
3. "Behold" = to observe with care; used to call special attention to what Simeon is about to say.
4. "Is set" = is appointed or constituted for that, or such will be the effect of His comingâ€”"for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be spoken against:"
 - A. "The fall" = denotes misery, suffering, disappointment, or ruin; this is reference to the passage where it is said that He should be a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" (Isa. 8:14â€”15); many expected a temporal prince, and in this they were disappointed; they loved darkness rather than light, and rejected Him, and fell into destruction.
 - B. "And rising again" = the word again is not expressed in the Greek; it seemed to be supposed by this phrase, that the same persons would fall and rise againâ€”but this is not the meaning in this passage; it means that many would be ruined by His coming, and that many others would be made

happy or be saved; many of the poor and humble that were willing to receive Him, would obtain pardon of sin and peaceâ€”would rise from their sins and sorrows here, and finally ascend to eternal life.

C. "And for a sign which shall be spoken against" = "sign" denotes a conspicuous or distinguished object, and the Lord Jesus was such an object of contempt and rejection by all the people; He was despised, profaned, cursed, ridiculed, and opposed (Acts 28:22); many have rejected the gospel and fallen into ruin; many are still falling of those who are ashamed of Jesus; many blaspheme Him, deny Him, speak all manner of evil against Him, and would crucify Him again if He were in their hands; but many also are renewed, justified, and raised up to life and peace.

5. This prophecy of Simeon has been fulfilled exactly as he said.

2) Concerning the mother. V. 35

V. 35

1. "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also)" = this prophecy proclaimed that Mary would suffer deep sorrow because of Jesus; no doubt her heart was torn during Jesus' earthly ministry due to the way He was mistreated, lied upon, and rejected by many; this prophecy was truly fulfilled when Mary stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified.

2. "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" = this is connected with the preceding verse, "He shall be a sign" a conspicuous object to be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be manifestâ€”that is, that they might show how much they hated holiness.

3. The testimony of Anna. V. 36â€”38

V. 36

1. "Anna" = name means grace.

2. "A prophetess" = a woman to whom future events or things hidden from others are at times revealed, either by dreams or visions in OT time and by inspiration in NT time (Heb. 1:1â€”2); sometimes this word could refer to the wife of a prophet; Acts 21:9 speaks of Philip's four daughters prophesyingâ€”means to speak for another, to foretell and also to forth-tell; a gift given by God fulfilling the prophecy of Joel 2:28 spoken by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17); a gift that Paul said he desired all to have (I Cor. 14:1, 24); this could apply to the forth-telling (testifying) of what the Lord had done for them in saving them which would edify, exhort, encourage, and comfort others (I Cor. 14:3); it does not mean that a woman is to teach and usurp authority over the man and violate the scripture of I Tim. 2:12; in fact when the Lord had something to tell Paul He did not use these four daughters but Agabus. (Acts 21:10)

3. "The daughter of Phanuel" = we know nothing about him except he was "of the tribe of Aser" = the tribe of Asher, which was one of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom that went into Assyrian captivity and for the most part all lost their identity; yet certain families preserved their genealogies, tracing their descent to one or the other of the lost tribesâ€”just a remnant that stayed true to God and His temple in Jerusalem.

4. "She was of a great age" = the exact age we know notâ€”some say she was 84 years old based on verse 37 but that phrase seems to mean she had been a widow for 84 years.

5. She "had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity" = means she was married for seven years and her husband died.

V. 37

1. "She was a widow of about fourscore and four years" = her husband had been dead for 84 years.

2. "Which departed not from the temple" = probably some small chamber in the temple was assigned to her where she performed some work in or about the sacred building; means she was constant and regular in all the public services of the temple, or was never absent from those services.

3. She "served God with fastings and prayers night and day" = refers to constant religious service,

spending her time in fasting and prayer; "night and day" means continually—that is at the usual times of public worship and in private—she was in a prayerful attitude all the time.

V. 38

1. "And she" = Anna.
2. "Coming in that instant" = at the instant Simeon was prophesying.
3. "Gave thanks likewise unto the Lord" = she amended Simeon's prophecy by giving thanks to the Lord—to express gratitude to the Lord for the revelation of His Messiah.
4. "And spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" = Anna joined the company of witnesses to Jesus in Luke's gospel when she began to speak continually to all saintly Jews of Jesus' arrival; she did not pass up an opportunity to witness to anyone who was willing to listen and had an ear to hear.

4. The return to Nazareth. V. 39-40

V. 39

1. "They" = Joseph and Mary.
2. "Had performed all things according to the law of the Lord" = refers to the circumcision of Jesus, the days of Mary's purification fulfilled, presenting Jesus to the Lord in the temple, and offering the sacrifice required.
3. "They returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth" = Galilee was a region of northern Palestine; Nazareth was Joseph and Mary's home town; not immediately after the temple visit, but after a time.
4. Luke omitted some things that occurred during this time:
 - A. They first went back to Bethlehem where they stayed almost two years.
 - B. They were visited by the wise men (Mat. 2:1-10) in Bethlehem where they resided in a house with the young child Jesus—almost two years of age. (Mat. 2:11)
 - C. The wise men were warned not to return to Herod. (Mat. 2:12)
 - D. An angel told Joseph to take the young child to Egypt for Herod sought to destroy Him. (Mat. 2:13)
 - E. Therefore Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt. (Mat. 2:14)
 - F. They stayed there until the death of Herod—we do not know the exact time. (Mat. 2:15)
 - G. During this time Herod slew all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age. (Mat. 2:16)
 - H. This action fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15. (Mat. 2:17-18)
 - I. After the death of Herod an angel told Joseph to take Jesus back to the land of Israel and he went to Nazareth. (Mat. 2:19-23) This action fulfilled Hosea 11:1.

V. 40

1. "The child" = Jesus.
2. "Grew" = He grew in physical stature.
3. "And waxed strong in spirit" = He was strengthened in mind, intellect and understanding; Jesus had a human soul, and that soul was subject to all the proper laws of a human spirit--He therefore increased in knowledge, strength, and character.
4. "Filled with wisdom" = exhibiting an extraordinary understanding and was wise to flee from everything sinful and evil.

5. "And the grace of God was upon him" = "grace" here simply means favor; God showed Him favor, or was pleased with Him and blessed Him.

6. In this short statement Luke tells the story of 12 quiet years.

7. All sorts of legends about our Lord's youth were written and published in the apocryphal books inserted between Malachi and Matthew, but none of them appear in the Scriptures. No work of power or miracles was done until John 2:11 beginning of miracles.

B. Jesus second recorded Temple visit. V. 41-50

1. The missing son. V. 41-47

a. The occasion. V. 41-42

V. 41

1. "His" = Jesus.

2. "Parents" = Joseph and Mary; Joseph adopted Jesus, thus he legally was His parent Matthew lists Jesus' genealogy through the lineage of Joseph--adoption.

3. "Went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" = the law required the attendance of all men at the three great feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16); this observance was only binding upon men but it is said that it was recommended women always be present at the Passover; the constant yearly presence of Joseph and Mary at this feast is another indication of the rigid obedience of Joseph and Mary to the ritual of the Law of Moses.

4. "The passover" = this feast was on the 14th day of April and was followed by the feast of unleavened bread which lasted for seven days; these two feasts were connected and sometimes when referring to the passover or the feast of unleavened bread, it referred to all eight days. (Lev. 23:4-8)

V. 42

1. "He" = Jesus.

2. "When he was twelve years old" = commentaries say that during Bible times Jewish boys became "sons of the law" = Hebrew, bar mitzvah; modern Jews perform a bar mitzvah for each boy when he turns 13.

3. "They went up to Jerusalem" = where the temple was and the feasts of the Jews were held; about 57 miles from Nazareth.

4. "After the custom of the feast" = according to the usual manner of the feast.

5. Whether this is Jesus' first visit to the temple for a passover, we are not certain. Since His parents came every year, it may be safe to assume Jesus came with them at other times.

b. The oversight. V. 43-45

V. 43

1. "And when they had fulfilled the days" = refers to the days of the two feasts combined--eight days.

2. "As they returned" = headed back to Nazareth.

3. "The child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem" = stayed in Jerusalem.

4. "Joseph and his mother knew not of it" = we would think this to be strange but they traveled in a company of relatives and acquaintances (verse 44) which may have been for safety reasons; also Jesus was not their only child, for by now they probably had at least six more--four boys and sisters (thus two girls at least; Mark 6:3).

V. 44

1. "They" = "their" = Joseph and Mary.
2. "Him" = Jesus.
3. "Supposing" = thinking; after all Jesus had never caused them any problem due to His being the perfect childâ€"God Incarnate; and even now He was not causing them a problem--just seemed to them He was.
4. "Went a day's journey; and sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance" = "the company" = a caravan; a company of travelersâ€"relatives and neighbors who had gone up with them to Jerusalem.

V. 45

1. "And when they found him not" = after searching the company they were with, they did not find Him.
2. "They turned back again to Jerusalem seeking him" = this was the natural thing to do.

c. The outcome. V. 46â€"47

V. 46

1. "And it came to pass" = refers to time they spent seeking for Jesusâ€"three days.
2. "After three days they found him in the temple" = in the court of the temple, for Jesus, not being a Levitical priest, could not enter into the temple itself.
3. "Sitting in the midst of the doctors" = the teachers and Rabbis who were the instructors of the people in matters of the law.
4. "Both hearing them, and asking them questions" = He asked questions concerning the law and the prophets; the questions were no doubt proposed in a respectful manner, and the answers listened to with proper respect to their age and rank.

V. 47

1. "And all that heard him" = refers to the teachers, Rabbis, and the common people who joined the group that had been gathered for three days (could have been four days); I believe that they had become so caught up that they did not have a break for a meal.
2. "Were astonished at his understanding and answers" = amazed; confounded with fear, surprise, or admiration; after all this was just a 12 year old boyâ€"God Incarnate.

2. The Messianic Son. V. 48â€"49

a. Mary's rebuke. V. 48

V. 48

1. "When they saw him, they were amazed" = the moment Joseph and Mary laid their eyes upon Jesus, they were confounded with fear, surprise, and wonder; they were amazed, not at Jesus' understanding and answers, (verse 47) but at finding Him in the temple of all places for a 12 year old boy; after all they had spent four days in their travel and search to find Him.
2. "His mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" = addressing Him the way she did is a mild form of rebuke for His insensitivity.
3. In a typical motherly fashion His mother continued, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" = "sorrowing" expresses anguish and torment; Mary was implying that Jesus' actions were irresponsible, according to her thinking.

4. "Thy father" = referring to Joseph, who was not His real father, but he was legally soâ€"adoption; the secret of Jesus' birth was not commonly known, so Joseph was called His father.

b. Jesus' reminder. V. 49

V. 49

1. "He" = "me" = "I" = "my" = Jesus.
2. "Them" = "ye" = Joseph and Mary.
3. "How is it that you sought me?" = why have you sought me with so much anxiety; Mary should have known that the Son of God was safeâ€"that the heavenly Father would take care of Him and that He could do nothing amiss.
4. "Wist ye not" = do you not know? had they forgotten the pastâ€"what the angel Gabriel had said and what the Holy Spirit did concerning the conceptionâ€"time and circumstances have a way of covering with a veil what God had said and done.
5. May we not get so caught up in our daily worldly activity so much that we forget what the Lord has done in our lives.
6. "I must be about my Father's business" = this implies that Jesus at 12 years of age had a keen realization of His relationship to God; this reference to the Father was Jesus' first recorded confirmation that He is the Son of God.

3. They misunderstood. V. 50

V. 50

1. "They" = "them" = Joseph and Mary.
2. "He" = Jesus.
3. "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them" = Mary and Joseph did not understand the meaning of what Jesus said; although they had heard the divine witnesses to the special role of Jesus, they did not understand all the particulars.
4. This shows how slow humans are to believe.

III. Nazareth. V. 51â€"52

V. 51

1. "He" = "his" = Jesus.
2. "Them" = Joseph and Mary.
3. "Went down with them and came to Nazareth" = they went back home to Nazareth which was at a lower elevation than Jerusalem, even though it was north of Jerusalem.
4. "Was subject to them" = performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child and was engaged in the trade of Josephâ€"that of a carpenter.
5. Joseph is not mentioned again in the gospel story; therefore, it is believed that he died sometime between Jesus being 12 years old and 30 years old. Jesus no doubt worked with Joseph as a carpenter until he died, and then he served as a carpenter to support His mother, half brothers, and half sisters until He was 30 years of ageâ€"when His public ministry began.
6. "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart" = just as Mary, 12 years before, pondered in her heart the sayings of the shepherds (verse 19), as doubtless she had done also when the wise men laid their costly gifts before the Baby at Bethlehem, and when Simeon and Anna in the temple spoke their prophetic utterances over the Child; so now in quiet humble faith, stored up again the Son's sayings in her heart, waiting with brave and constant patience for the hour when her God should grant her to see face to face the mysterious things she had hitherto seen only "in a glass darkly." (I Cor. 13:12)

V. 52

1. "And Jesus increased in wisdom" = stated in verse 40 for the first 12 years of His life and now for the next 18 years—when His public ministry started; simply means He increased in wisdom—exhibited an extraordinary understanding and was wise to flee from everything sinful and evil.
2. Also He increased in "stature" = His bodily development proceeded in the same orderly fashion as it does with other men; means there was growth in His size, consciousness, and comprehension of events; He was perfect in every stage as He attained it and He was far from the flaws that disfigure the rest of men at each stage of growth.
3. Also "He increased in favour" = favor is from the same Greek word as "grace" in verse 40, means God showed Him favor or was pleased with Him and blessed Him during these 18 silent years of Jesus.
4. "Favour with God" = refers to spiritual maturity.
5. "Favour with man" = refers to social maturity.
6. In this verse Luke records 18 years of Jesus' life—from 12–30 years of age. And Luke is the only writer that says anything about these silent years.

CHAPTER 3:

I. The labor of John the Baptist. V. 1–22

A. The Message of John. V. 1–14

1. When he preaches. V. 1–2

V. 1

1. Luke was a careful historian due to his listing who was ruling and where at the time of the beginning of John's ministry and of Jesus' ministry six months later.
2. "Tiberius Caesar" = he was the adopted son of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1); he was the reigning emperor of Rome when John began his public ministry—this was the 15th year of his reign.
3. "Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea" = he was responsible to the emperor for the welfare of the province.
4. "Herod" = this was Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great who ruled over Galilee and the territory east of the Jordan River; he was "tetrarch of Galilee" = means he was strictly the ruler of one quarter of a given territory; "tetrarch" came to be a general title, denoting one who reigned over any part—a third, a half, and etc.; in this case Herod had a third of the dominion of his father; it was this Herod who imprisoned John the Baptist and to whom our Lord was sent by Pilate when He was being tried.
5. "His brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis" = another one of Herod the Great's sons.
 - A. "Ituraea" = region situated on the east side of Jordan, and was taken from the descendants of Jetur, one of Ishmael's sons, by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh.
 - B. "And of the region of Trachonitis" = this region was also on the east of Jordan, and extended northward to the district of Damascus and eastward to the deserts of Arabia.
6. "Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene" = Abilene was situated in Syria, northwest of Damascus and southeast of Mount Lebanon, and was adjacent to Galilee; little is known about this man; he seems to be tetrarch of this region originally given by Herod the Great to one of his sons who is now off the scene.

V. 2

1. "Anns and Caiaphas being the high priests" = there was, properly speaking, but one high priest of the Jews; yet the name of high priest continued to be given to those who had been in that office; Annas had been deposed some 15 years before this time by the action of the Roman official at that time, but in spite of that action he still continued to be regarded as the legitimate high priest by the great majority of his countrymen; Caiaphas was Annas' son-in-law.
2. "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" = the divine call came to John as it did to the OT prophet's (Hosea 1:1); from childhood he had been designated for some great work, and he knew it; his whole early life had been a training for it and at last the call came; we are not told of its special form—it may have been a vision similar to that revealed to Moses or Isaiah.
3. We have very little told about John the Baptist's first 30 years. (Luke 1:80)

V. 3

1. "And he came into all the country about Jordan" = his home where he no doubt grew up was in the hill country about Hebron (Luke 1:39); this refers to the region round about the Jordan river.
2. "Preaching" = to be a herald; to officiate as a herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald; to make a public proclamation of the news of the advent of the Messiah with such formality, gravity, and authority as must be listened to and obeyed; it is used in the N.T. of the public proclamation of the gospel and material pertaining to it.
3. "Baptism of repentance" = refers to a baptism connected with the repentance of the individual; this is a baptism which involved an obligation to repent. (Mat. 3:8)
4. "Repentance" = to change one's mind, attitude, heart, and direction; this is a work of God by godly sorrow (II Cor. 7:10); involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God.
5. "For" = because of (Acts 2:38; an example is Mat. 12:41).
6. "Remission" = to send from oneself; it refers to the act of putting something away; God did that when He stepped down from His judgment throne, robed Himself in flesh, took the guilt of man's sins upon Him and paid the penalty on the Cross; thus, satisfying His justice, and making possible an offer of mercy on the basis of justice satisfied.
7. One can only come into benefit of that when he believes on the Lord Jesus.
8. Then submission to water baptism is his testimony to the fact that he has repented and believed.
9. John preached the same message we preach today. The only difference is that he looked toward the cross, and we look back to the cross.

V. 4

1. "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet" = quoting Isaiah 40:3-5 in verses 4-6; the tense in the Greek is the perfect tense which refers to a past completed action with existing results; indicates it was written down in time past and is still on record today (Psa. 119:89; Mat. 24:35); "Esaias" is the NT English spelling of the OT Isaiah; prophet is a foreteller; one moved by the Spirit of God declaring what he has received by inspiration (God-breathed) concerning future events.
2. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" = in humility John the Baptist quotes the OT prophecy concerning his mission; John the Baptist also told the Jewish committee who came out to ask him who he was in John 1:23 by identifying himself as the forerunner of the Messiah.
 - A. "Voice" = refers to the sound of uttered words.
 - B. "Crying" = to speak with a high, strong voice; refers to preaching. (Mat. 3:1-3)
 - C. "Wilderness" = a solitary, lonely, desolate, uninhabited place.
3. "Make his paths straight" = "make straight" = one word in the Greek; means to lead or guide straight.
4. "His" = the Messiah

5. "Paths" = road; this language was used of rulers who had road crews going before them to prepare the way so that their travel would be made easier; John the Baptist heralded (preached; crying out) the coming of the King; therefore, the road had to be made ready.

V. 5

1. This verse gives some specifics that can be applied spiritually to the Jewish nation in John the Baptist's day.
2. "Every valley shall be filled" = could refer to the moral and religious indifference of such as the Sadducees.
3. "Every mountain and hill shall be brought low" = could refer to the pride of the Pharisees.
4. "The crooked shall be made straight" = could refer to the frauds and lying excuses of the publicans.
5. "And the rough ways *shall be* made smooth" = could refer to the sinful habits found in all, even the best.
6. John the Baptist heralded (preached; crying out) the coming of the King. Therefore, the road had to be made ready. This is referring, not to a physical road, even though the thought is no doubt taken from the physical, but it applies to the spiritual application—God would soon visit men with His salvation.

V. 6

1. Only Luke quotes Isa. 40:5.
2. "All flesh" = Jew and Gentile alike.
3. "Shall see" = when all this work (verses 4–5) was complete then all people would see "the salvation of God" = the deliverer; the Messiah would publicly appear.
4. John the Baptist faithfully performed his ministry as a forerunner of Christ. (John 1:6–9)

3. To whom he preached. V. 7–20

a. The Jewish religious leaders and lay people. V. 7–11

V. 7

1. "Then said he" = John the Baptist preached "to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him" = a large crowd gathered around him desiring to be baptized.
2. "Baptized" = not a translation but a transliteration of the Greek word "baptizo" = to place into; to make fully wet.
4. Mat. 3:7 states the multitude was made up of many Pharisees and Sadducees and he told them the same cutting rebukes. Mark 1:5 indicates there were many different groups present at his preaching.
5. "O generation of vipers" = the offspring of vipers; vipers are a species of serpents, from 2 to 5 feet in length and about an inch thick, with a flat head; they are of an ash or yellowish color, speckled with long brown spots; there is no serpent that is more poisonous; the person bitten by them swells up almost immediately and falls down dead; the same Greek word is used in Acts 28:6; this phrase is used to denote their malignancy and malice of heart and their wickedness and evil intentions.
6. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come" = John expresses his astonishment that sinners so hardened and so hypocritical as they were should have been influenced to flee from wrath to come—means divine indignation, or the punishment that will come on the guilty; impending judgment is the alternative to repentance.

V. 8

1. "Therefore" = in view of the fact the multitude did not have fruits of repentance.

2. "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance" = fruits are produced the moment one is saved--when believed. (Col. 1:6; II Cor. 5:17)

A. "Bring forth" = show forth.

B. "Fruits" = conduct; actions; inside and out. (Mat. 7:16-20)

C. "Worthy" = meet; fit; appropriate actions, and directions; a turning from sin to God, taking up sides with God against self.

3. "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father" = the religious Jews regarded it as sufficient righteousness that they were descended from so holy a man as Abraham; they trusted in their descent from Abraham to bring them deliverance; John proclaimed that God would base His judgment on a person's life, not his lineage.

4. "I say unto you" = "I" refers to John speaking to the multitude.

5. "That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" = the meaning seems to be this: God, from these stones, could more easily raise up those who should be worthy children of Abraham, or be like him, than to simply, because you are descendants of Abraham, make you, who are proud and hypocritical, subjects of the Messiah's kingdom; in other words, mere nativity, or the privileges of birth avail nothing where there is no righteousness of life. (John 8:31-33)

V. 9

1. "And now" = at the time John came forth at 30 years of age.

2. "Also" = indeed.

3. "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees" = this phrase denotes that the tree is to be cut down, not pruned or trimmed, but the very tree itself was to be struck; this is a figure of speech of direct threatening of future wrath.

4. "Every tree" = referring to individuals who made up the nation of Israel; these religious leaders came forth making a promising profession, but John knew their condition of heart and said:

5. "Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" = he told them they should bear fruit as well as blossoms (profession); their professions of repentance were not enough, they should show by a holy life (not just outwardly but inwardly as well), that their profession was genuine; Paul describes this fruit appropriately as the fruit of the Spirit, not our own--the life style of repentance. (Gal. 5:22-23)

6. "Cast into the fire" = hell; future wrath; refers to individuals who make up the nation of Israel.

7. The city of Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed in AD 70, thus destroying the existence of Israel as a nation. Each Jew which did not bring forth fruit as the Lord required went to hell when he died. Judgment was imminent when John prophesied this.

V. 10

1. "The people" = seems to apply to the Jewish leaders and the common people who may have had ears to hear.

2. "What shall we do" = John had told them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, or to lead a life which showed that their repentance was genuine--asked this question.

V. 11

1. "He" = John the Baptist.

2. "Answered" = to give an answer to the question asked in verse 10.

3. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" = the answer was to aid the poor according to your ability; be benevolent, and you will thus show that your repentance is genuine.

4. To the people in general he taught the importance of sharing one's substance with those less fortunate. He specifically mentioned clothing and food (meatâ€™not necessarily meat as we know it today but foodâ€™bread, beans, corn, and etc.) but he no doubt had other needs in mind. The Bible is full of commands to care for the less fortunate. Unselfishness and generosity are fruits worthy of repentance.

5. John's answers remind me of what Jesus told the rich young ruler. (Mark 10:21â€™fruits worthy for repentance.)

b. The publicans. V. 12â€™13

V. 12

1. "Publicans" = tax collectors, noted for their undue exercise of power; a certain part of man's earnings was demanded for taxes, but the publicans usually asked more, and enriched themselves by the difference; they were hated by the people, who considered them traitors because they worked for Rome.

2. They no doubt heard John's answer to the common people so now they say "Master, what shall we do?" = coming to be baptized and having heard John say, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," they now ask this question.

V. 13

1. "He" = John the Baptist said unto the publicans:

2. "Exact no more than that which is appointed you" = demand or take no more than that which is commanded you by the Roman government.

3. John required the tax collectors to be honest in their offices, sparing the people from excessive taxes. John considered fair and honest business practices and generosity with their wealth as the major fruits of repentance for the tax collectors. When Zacchaeus came to Jesus he saidâ€™Luke 19:8â€™fruits worthy of repentance.

c. The soldiers. V. 14

V. 14

1. "The soldiers likewise" = the soldiers also came to be baptized by John and asked, "What shall we do?" = to bring fruits worthy of repentance.

3. "Him" = "he" = John the Baptist.

4. He said, "Do violence to no man" = "violence" means to shake down; to make to tremble; to terrify; to extort from one by intimidation money or other property; soldiers were often brutal to civilians, and practiced extortion (undue exercise of power).

5. "Neither accuse *any* falsely" = it is probable that when the soldiers desired something that another had and they could not obtain it by violence, they often falsely accused the persons of a crime to obtain what they desired.

6. "And be content with your wages" = do not murmur or complain, or take unlawful means to increase your wages; wages means not only the money that was paid them but also their rations or daily allowance of food.

7. By these actions, they were to show that their repentance was genuineâ€™that it produced a real reformation of life. Every profession of repentance (salvation) which is not attended with a change of life is mere hypocrisy.

8. I am reminded of Acts 2:37 where a large group on the day of Pentecost asked the question, "What shall we do?" after they heard the preaching of Peter in power. And Peter said "repent" in Acts 2:38 and "save yourselves from this untoward (crooked, perverse, wicked, warped) generation" in Acts 2:40â€™bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

7. John did not see the fruits of repentance as efforts to earn salvation but rather as concrete,

practical evidences that a life had been touched and moved by the mercy of God. The fruits of repentance were not the fruits of legalism but of a relationship between God and the forgiven ones.

B. The misunderstanding about John. V. 15-18

1. The confusion. V. 15

V. 15

1. "And as the people were in expectation" = expecting the Messiah to come; there was general expectation at that time among the Jews that Messiah's coming was at hand.
2. "Mused in their hearts of John" = thought of John's character, his preaching, and his success, and anxiously inquired whether he did not do the things expected of the Messiah = "whether he were the Christ, or not" = "Christ" is a general term meaning "Messiah;" it is a title, not a proper name.

2. The clarification. V. 16-18

V. 16

1. "John answered, saying unto *them* all" = his answer affirmed that the people's rising expectations of messianic activity were indeed correct, but he made it equally clear in most emphatic terms that he was at best only a servant of the Messiah.
2. "I indeed baptize you with water" = John immersed in water those who came with fruits of repentance; his action was merely symbolic—it could not purify them; his work had been to stir them up to repentance, to arouse them to change their lives.
3. "But one mightier than I cometh" = but One who was mightier (greater in strength and ability) than John was coming—nigh at hand; refers to the Messiah; remember John was a forerunner of the Messiah.
4. "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose" = "latchet" refers to the thongs or ties by which sandals were fastened to the feet; when people entered another's house their lowest servant would untie the sandals; John is saying he was unworthy to perform the menial task of untying the shoe of the mighty One coming.
5. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" = He shall send upon you the Holy Ghost—the third person of the Trinity, whose office is to enlighten, renew, convert, sanctify, comfort the soul, and to guide in all truth.
6. To be baptized with the Holy Ghost means that the Messiah would send upon the world a far more powerful and mighty influence than had attended the preaching of John.
7. "And with fire" = some believe this refers to the afflictions and persecutions with which men would be tried under the gospel; it is true of the children of God—they will be afflicted (II Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22); others believe this means judgment and wrath; if this be the case the meaning is that He would baptize a portion of mankind—those who were willing to be His followers—with the Holy Ghost, but the rest of mankind—the wicked—with fire; that is with judgment and wrath; fire is a symbol of purification and power.

V. 17

1. "Whose" = "his hand" = the Messiah.
2. The imagery of the farmer threshing wheat is used in this verse.
 - A. "Fan" = refers to a winnowing fork sometimes referred to as a shovel; used for throwing up the grain, after it is threshed, into the air that the chaff might be driven away by the wind and the grain fall down in a heap—mode still practiced in the East of separating the grain from the chaff.
 - B. "Thoroughly purged" = to cleanse thoroughly; shall remove the chaff.
 - C. "Floor" = the threshing floor; a rock or hard place usually on an elevated place where the wind blows.

D. "Garner" = the granary or place to deposit the wheat.

E. "The chaff" = straw broken up by a threshing machine; refers to the wicked.

F. "The wheat" = grain; refers to the righteous.

G. "Will burn with fire unquenchable" = all but the grain would be burned or destroyed; refers to the suffering of the wicked in hell.

3. The image of the threshing floor is as sobering as the ax laid to the root of the unfruitful tree. (verse 9)

V. 18

1. "He" = John the Baptist.

2. "And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people" = "exhortation" means the form of words intended to incite and encourage; this lets us know that John's preaching included a lot more than Luke recorded but this is what the Holy Ghost wanted him to pen down. (II Tim. 3:16)

C. John's future encounter with Herod. V. 19â€20

V. 19

1. Luke inserts these two verses to show that the fearless John was no respecter of persons.

2. "Herod the tetrarch" = ruler over the region where John preached and ministered.

3. "Being reproved" = to show one's fault.

A. "For Herodias his brother Philip's wife" = (Mark 6:18) Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip; John said it was not lawful to do so.

B. "And for all the evils which Herod had done" = John left no stone unturned when it came to denouncing sin; he told it like it was.

V. 20

1. "Added yet this above all" = added to Herod's sins listed in verse 19, "He shut up John in prison" = not implying this was the worst of his acts but this was one of his deeds not given in detail by Luke; Herodias had Herod to behead John the Baptist.

2. This event mentioned here did not take place until some time after this, but it is mentioned here to show what was the end of John's preaching or to fill out the account concerning him.

3. Luke did not record all the specifics but Matthew did (Mat. 14:3â€11) and so did Mark. (Mark 6:17â€28)

D. John baptized Jesus. V. 21â€22

V. 21

1. "Now when all the people were baptized" = refers to all the people who came on this specific day; this evidently took some time but Jesus waited till last = "it came to pass" = Luke does not record the actual baptism as Matthew did in Mat. 3:13â€15.

2. "That Jesus also being baptized" = having been baptizedâ€when He came up out of the water, Luke mentions He was "praying" = only Luke mentions this; this shows Jesus as in the habit of prayer.

3. "The heaven was opened" = to cleave asunder; to divide by rending; rent asunder; means they split like a garment; a sudden event.

V. 22

1. "The Holy Ghost" = Holy Spirit; Spirit of Christ; third part of the Trinity (three co-equal, co-existent, co-eternal persons of the Godhead).
2. "Descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him" =
 - A. "In a bodily shape" = this was a real visible appearance--at least to John, the others I know not for sure.
 - B. "Like a dove" = the Spirit was not a dove but "like" a dove descending; "like" means as it were, is a simile and not the real thing; a dove is the emblem of purity and harmlessness.
 - C. "Upon" = in OT time the Holy Spirit came upon an individual to enable him to fulfill his ministry; Jesus was deity before this event took place, yet every miracle He performed was by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:37-38)
3. "And a voice came from heaven, which said, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased'" = a voice came out of heaven; this voice was for John so that he would know beyond doubt that this was the Son of God. (John 1:32-34)
 - A. "Beloved Son" = "thee" = dear Son; believers are sons of God but the Messiah is the unique Son of God and sustains a different relationship to the Father than we do.
 - B. "I am well pleased" = one word in the Greek; means to take pleasure in; delight; satisfaction; the tense regards the Father as always having been pleased with the Son (reaches back into the past) and as always being pleased with Him; it is a delight that never had a beginning and will never have an end.
4. For those who do not believe in a triune God, here are all three persons of the Godhead present.
 - A. God the Son = Jesus had just been baptized and was praying.
 - B. God the Holy Spirit = descended upon Jesus in a bodily shape like a dove.
 - C. God the Father = spoke in an audible voice from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

II. The line of Jesus the Messiah. V. 23-38

V. 23-38

1. "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age" = this was the age of which the Levites entered upon their work; Jesus was not a Levite but from the tribe of Judah--thus, He was not a priest after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 5:6 quoting Psa. 110:4); generally speaking, thirty years old among the Jews was looked upon as the time of life when manhood had reached its full development.
2. "Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" = as was commonly thought, or perhaps being legally, by adoption, reckoned as his son; the article "the" in the Greek is omitted before Joseph but found before all the names in the long list of this genealogy.
3. This is the genealogy of Mary which begins with her father, Heli who was a descendant of David through Nathan (verse 31) and ends with Adam. (verse 38) In Mat. 1:2-16 we have the genealogy of Joseph beginning with Abraham and ending with Jesus. Joseph was a descendent of David through Solomon. (Mat. 1:6)

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